DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 385 522 SP 036 143

AUTHOR Biesta, Gert J. J.
TITLE From Manipulation to Communication: Communicative Pedagogy and the Postmodern Crisis of the Subject.
PUB DATE Apr 95
NOTE 19p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (San Francisco, CA, April 18-22, 1995).
PUB TYPE Viewpoints (Opinion/Position Papers, Essays, etc.) (120) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Child Development; Child Psychology; Children; Developmental Psychology; *Educational Philosophy; Educational Principles; *Educational Theories; Elementary Education; Higher Education; *Teacher Student Relationship
IDENTIFIERS *Foucault (Michel); *Postmodernism

ABSTRACT

This paper explores the implications of the postmodern deconstruction of the subject for the understanding of pedagogical (inter)action, most notably with respect to the issue of manipulation versus communication. The philosophical basis of the paper is the work of Michel Foucault, which is discussed in detail. Manipulative pedagogy and communicative pedagogy are contrasted. One of the main outcomes of the elusive cultural, theoretical, and political shift known as 'postmodernism' has been the deconstruction of the modern understanding of the human subject as an autonomous, pre-social, trans-historical source of truth, rationality, and identity. Traditionally, education has been understood as the process by which the child becomes equipped to take part in the domain of intersubjectivity; education has been seen as (manipulative) initiation into intersubjectivity. This interpretation suggests that education is a means towards an end that lies outside of education. However, there is strong empirical evidence to suggest that the child plays an active role in the constitution of its own subjectivity. A postmodern articulation of the pedagogical is not interested in what the subject is, but in who the subject is. Such an articulation of pedagogical has to make the step from manipulation to communication, but it has to acknowledge that communication is always that which is at stake. (Contains 37 references.) (ND)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 385 522

From manipulation to communication

Communicative pedagogy and the postmodern crisis of the subject[1]

Paper presented at the 1995 AERA Annual Meeting
San Francisco, CA., April 18-22, 1995
SIG *Philosophical Studies of Education*

Gert J.J. Biesta, Ph.D.

Utrecht University
Department of Education
Philosophy and History of Education
PO BOX 80.140
3508 TC UTRECHT
The Netherlands

phone: +31-30-534931
from October 1995 onwards: +31-30-2534931
fax: +31-30-537731
from October 1995 onwards: +31-30-2537731

E-mail: BIESTA@FSW.RUU.NL

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
G. Biesta
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

SP036143

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

'There are moments in life when the question whether you can think differently from how you actually think and perceive differently from how you actually see, is essential to be able to keep seeing and thinking.'

Michel Foucault[2]

1. From manipulation to communication

Among educators of very different times and places there appears to be a widespread consensus about the idea that the relationship between educator and educandee should be -- or at least should become -- an equal and symmetrical relationship. For this reason, education is referred to in such terms as "dialogue" and "communication". There is at least one obvious reason for this communicative intuition, grounded in the fact that education is a relationship between human beings. The argument is, that education cannot and should not be reduced to a merely instrumental relationship, as this would ignore the personhood -- or at least the emerging personhood -- of the child. In Western philosophy the locus classicus of this idea is Kant's second formulation of the Categorical Imperative, where he argues that because man exists "as an end in itself", he must in all actions be regarded not merely as a means, but always "at the same time as an end" (Kant, 1991).

The communicative intuition about education is rooted in a typically modern articulation of the pedagogical, which rests upon two related ideas. The first is that subjectivity is thought to be dependent upon its pedagogical constitution. The modern subject is educated consciously, and its later identity is seen as the outcome of previous pedagogical influence.[3] It has therefore rightly been argued that modern pedagogy sets in with Rousseau and not with Descartes (see Oelkers, 1983, 272). But although modern pedagogy understands subjectivity as the *effect* of pedagogical influence, it is not seen as its *realization*. Modern pedagogy -- and this is a *leitmotif* which runs through educational discourse until this very day -- locates the pedagogical in the *tension* between "spontaneity and reproductivity" (Schleiermacher, 1983/1984), in the problem of the *coordination* of "the individual and the social factors" (Dewey, 1972, 224), in the *disfunctionality* of our educational institutions (Mollenhauer, 1973, 28-31), in the

combined *insertion and investment* of the subject in the symbolic order (McLaren, 1991, 154-155), in the *split* between identity and agency (Donald, 1992, 2). The pedagogical project of modernity is thus founded upon a normative presupposition, viz. the irreducible value of the (emerging) subjectivity of the child (cf. Biesta, in press[a]).

Notwithstanding the widespread recognition of the communicative intuition, its adoption into educational theory and practice has been ambivalent. On the one hand there are educators who endorse the Kantian maxim but at the same time argue that the child is *not yet* capable of dialogue and communication. This ability is seen as the very sign of adulthood and is therefore postulated as the intended outcome of education. Education itself is depicted as a trajectory which sets out as manipulation and eventually develops into communication. The point of this position -- to which I will refer as *manipulative pedagogy* -- can be made clear by paraphrasing Richard Peters in that the child can and must enter the "Palace of Communication" through the "Courtyard of Manipulation" (Peters, 1963, 55). Manipulative pedagogy entails the educational paradox -- Kant's question 'How do I cultivate freedom through coercion?' -- because in seeing education as a process in which the child is in a sense *made* into a person, the personhood of the child is simultaneously affirmed and denied.

The manipulative conception of education stands in sharp contrast to the position to which I will refer as *communicative pedagogy*. Here we find educators who do not merely want to anticipate the child's communicative capacity by treating it, e.g., as a useful practical fiction. They want to acknowledge this capacity within the very process of education itself. Consequently, they treat education as *real* dialogue or *real* communication. Here we also find a trajectory from manipulation to communication, in the sense that adherents of this position argue for a replacement of a manipulative understanding of education or a manipulative educational practice by a communicative or a dialogical one.

Although the communicative conception of education may spark off some sympathy, it seems blatantly unsustainable in the light of "the brute facts of child development" (Peters, 1963, 54). This at least is, what has been argued over and over again by critics of a communicative conception of education (see, e.g., Young, 1990; Gössling, 1993) Their point is, that the child is simply not yet capable of *real* communication and *real* dialogue. The child is thought to lack *communicative*

competency, not only in a loose sense in that the child has to acquire language before it can enter into dialogue, but also in a strict sense in which communicative competency is thought to consist of the *social* capacity for entering into argumentation and the *cognitive* capacity to generate or criticize arguments (Young, 1990, 111-115). Communicative pedagogy, so it is argued, is a *contradiction in terms*, as it makes the intended outcome of education the very precondition of its start and course (Gössling, 1993, 89).

The alleged obviousness of this argument should not blind us for the specificity of its presuppositions. It is important to see that the whole argument derives its validity from a typically modern understanding of human subjectivity. This understanding has its roots in the philosophy of Descartes, who made the human *cogito* the center of the universe. It was further shaped by Leibniz, who understood this *cogito* as a monad, as a self-enclosed entity. It found its full expression in the Kantian "empirico-transcendental doublet" (Foucault, 1973, 319), consisting of a body being subject to the laws of nature and a mind or reason being literally autonomous, i.e., a lawgiver to itself (cf. Bartels, 1993). Habermas refers to this conglomerate as the (paradigm of the) philosophy of consciousness (Habermas, 1988).

On account of this model of human subjectivity, communication is understood as an interaction between independent human subjects in which they exchange thoughts and feelings which are presumed to be theirs prior to the interaction.[4] The interaction itself is considered to be an achievement of the interacting partners. This not only implies that subjectivity is thought to precede intersubjectivity; it also implies that intersubjectivity is seen as constituted by the intentional actions of the interacting subjects. If communication is understood in these "volitional" terms, it is obvious that the child does not yet live up to the implied standard of subjectivity. It thus has to be manipulated -- for its own well being -- by the adult as long as and in so far as it is not yet a "real" subject. From this perspective manipulative pedagogy is inevitable.

The point is, however, that this perspective is itself *not* inevitable. One of the main outcomes of the elusive cultural, theoretical and political shift known as "postmodernism"[5] has precisely been the deconstruction of the modern understanding of the human subject as an autonomous, pre-social, trans-historical source of truth, rationality, and identity. In postmodern discourse the human subject no longer figures as

a point from which the universe can be moved. Postmodernism has shown us the human subject as 'produced in a whole range of discursive practices -- economic, political and social -- the meanings of which are a constant site of struggle over power' (Weedon, 1987, 21).

The question that I want to take up in this paper, concerns the implications of the postmodern deconstruction of the subject for the understanding of pedagogical (inter)action, most notably with respect to the issue of manipulation versus communication. As the inevitability of manipulative pedagogy only seems to hold against the background of the paradigm of the philosophy of consciousness, communicative pedagogy can at least no longer be disregarded *automatically* as a contradiction in terms. In this paper I will argue that the postmodern deconstruction of the subject opens up the possibility to overcome the alleged inevitability of manipulative pedagogy, although it requires an articulation of the pedagogical that also goes beyond "traditional" communicative pedagogy. To get a clear view of what is at stake in the postmodern deconstruction of the subject, I will first discuss parts of the work of Michel Foucault. On the basis of that discussion, I will give a broad outline of a postmodern "pedagogy without humanism" that lies ahead.

2. Foucault and the Postmodern Crisis of the Subject

2.1. The Rise and Fall of Modern "Man"

A major factor in the postmodern dislocation of the subject has been the work of Michel Foucault. Foucault became more or less famous for a claim he developed most explicitly in *The Order of Things -- An Archeology of the Human Sciences* (Foucault, 1973), viz., that man is a recent and a Modern invention. In his book Foucault describes[6] two ruptures that have taken place in Western thought since the Middle Ages; one around 1600, marking the shift from the Age of Renaissance to the Classical Age, and one around 1800, marking the shift from the Classical to the Modern Age. In the latter "epistemic shift" Foucault locates the emergence of man as we know him today, viz., as both 'an object of knowledge and a subject that knows' (Foucault, 1973, 312).

Foucault shows that in the Classical Age man was just a being among other

beings, having its place in a divine order. As the belief in this divine order of reality and of man's place in it broke down, the acknowledgement of man's finitude emerged. The startling thing about the recognition of this finitude was, that it was not lamented as a limitation but -- most explicitly in the philosophy of Kant -- made into the very condition of the possibility of knowledge. Foucault identifies this attempt to treat factual limitations as finitude and then make finitude the condition of the possibility of all facts -- a strategy to which he refers as the *analytic of finitude* -- as the central characteristic of the Modern Age. The analytic of finitude got its anthropological articulation in the Kantian "empirico-transcendental doublet". This doublet marks the "threshold of our modernity" (Foucault, 1973, 319).

Foucault point is that the analytic of finitude was doomed from the start because of its inherently contradictory and therefore unstable character. He shows how modernity is haunted by the difficult, if not impossible task to claim simultaneously an identity *and* a difference between finitude as limitation (the "positive") and finitude as source of all knowledge (the "fundamental"). The attempt to reconcile the positive and the fundamental came about in a three-fold way. Under the modern *episteme* man appeared (1) as a fact among other facts to be studied empirically, and yet as the transcendental condition of the possibility of all knowledge (e.g., Kant); (2) as surrounded by what he cannot get clear about, and yet as a potentially lucid cogito, the source of all intelligibility (e.g., Husserl and Freud); and (3) as the product of a long history whose beginning he can never reach and yet, paradoxically, as the source of that very history (e.g., Heidegger) (cf. Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1983, 31). Many of not all modern attempts to articulate a science of man are in one way or another punctuated with examples of the strategy of the analytic of finitude (cf. De Mul, 1987).

However: even more important -- and more controversial -- than the claim that man is a recent invention, was the consequence Foucault drew from his research, viz. that *because* the emergence of man is bound up with the emergence of the Modern *episteme*, there is every reason to expect man's eventual erasure "like a face drawn in sand at the edge of the sea" (Foucault, 1973, 387).

2.2. The End of "Man" and the Recovery of the Subject

It has been for phrases like this one, that postmodernism has been taken as the very

subversion of the subject. But even a superficial glance at Foucault's arguments, makes clear that what is at stake -- at least in his writings -- is not the eventual erasure of man as a "really existing entity", but only the eventual erasure of the modern *articulation* of subjectivity; an articulation represented most comprehensively in the Kantian "empirico-transcendental doublet". This -- and nothing more than this -- is at stake in Foucault's claim of "the end of man". In so far then, as postmodernism implies a crisis of a subject, it is a crisis of modern "man".

Against this background it should no longer come as a surprise when we find Foucault declaring that the subject is in fact the general theme of his research (see e.g., Foucault, 1983, 209), nor when we find the subject to be in the center of his practical commitment (see, e.g., Foucault, 1991). The point is, that Foucault in no way rejects theorizing about the subject, not even by the subject in general. The only thing he rejects is

> 'that you first of all set up a theory of the subject -- as could be done in phenomenology and in existentialism -- and that, beginning from the theory of the subject, you come to pose the question of knowing, for example, how such and such a form of knowledge was possible' (Foucault, 1991, 10).

Foucault's problem concerns any *a priori* theory of the subject, i.e., any theory about the subject that does not take the theorizing activity of that subject itself into account (see ibid.). Since such a theory assumes prior objectification, it cannot be asserted as 'a basis for analytic work' (Foucault, 1983, 209). This does not imply that analytic work should go on without conceptualization. But Foucault warns us that 'the conceptualized object is not the single criterion of a good conceptualization' (ibid.).

In fact, Foucault puts into question the very idea that there exists such a thing as a "natural subject" that only needs to be interpreted. This at least is what can be learned from his *genealogical* writings, where he argues that the objects of the objectifying social sciences and the subjects of the subjectifying social sciences are the "instrument-effects" of specific historical forms of power, viz. disciplinary power (see Foucault, 1979) and pastoral power (see Foucault, 1980).

Although Foucault speaks of "instrument-effects", and although he presents "man" as in a sense the product of the modern *episteme*, he stresses that this does not

imply a passivity from the side of the subject.[7] The active contribution of the subject in the constitution of its own subjectivity becomes an explicit theme in the third "phase" in Foucault's work. Here he focusses upon the way in which the subject constitutes himself in an active fashion by what he calls the *practices of the self* (see Foucault, 1985; 1986; cf. Biesta, in press[b]). It should be acknowledged that this is not a retreat to the "analytic of finitude". Foucault stresses that the practices of the self are not something that the individual himself invents.

> 'They are patterns that he finds in his culture and which are proposed, suggested and imposed on him by his culture, his society and his social group' (Foucault, 1991, 11).

2.3. Enlightenment without Humanism

One of the interesting -- and for some even surprising -- consequences that Foucault has drawn from his diagnosis of modernity, is that it in a sense opens up new opportunities for the project Enlightenment, albeit with one crucial difference, viz,. that Enlightenment can no longer be understood as a doctrine or a theory, but has to be seen as an "attitude" or a "philosophical ethos". Foucault describes this ethos as "a permanent critique of our historical era" (see Foucault, 1984, 103), as a "historical ontology of ourselves" (ibid., 105).

What Foucault has in mind, is a thoroughly practical project; a project which first of all requires what is called a *limit-attidue*. What is needed, is

> 'a historical investigation into the events that have lead us to constitute ourselves and to recognize ourselves as subjects of what we are doing, thinking, saying [in order] to separate out, from the contingency that has made us what we are, the possibility of no longer being doing, or thinking what we are, do, or think' (ibid., 105).

Foucault suggests a practical critique that takes the form of a "possible transgression", thereby giving a new impetus to the "undefined work of freedom" (ibid., 105).

This project is thought to be thoroughly *experimental*. The "work done at the limits of ourselves" must not only open up a realm of historical inquiry, but also put itself to the test (ibid., 105). It is a historical, a practical and a non-universal test of the limits that we may go beyond; it is "work carried out by ourselves upon ourselves as

free beings" (ibid., 106).

> The critical ontology of ourselves thus has to be considered 'not, certainly, as a theory, a doctrine, nor even as a permanent body of knowledge that is accumulating; it has to be conceived as an attitude, an ethos, a philosophical life in which the critique of what we are is at one and the same time the historical analysis of the limits that are imposed on us and an experiment with the possibility of going beyond them' (ibid., 108).

In this way this critical ontology seeks to further the impetus of Enlightenment, but without the certainty or guarantee of a humanism, i.e., without any "deep truth" about the subject (cf. ibid., 104).

2.4. Intersubjectivity and the Return of the Political

Two lessons are to be learned from Foucault's diagnosis of modernity. The first concerns Foucault's reconstruction of the emergence of "man". The point that I want to make with respect to this reconstruction is, that it suggests that "man" as the modern articulation of subjectivity is not a fact but a specific solution to a specific problem.[8] "Man" thus has to be understood as an answer. The important question here is, what kind of an answer "man" is. Foucault gives a clue, in that he presents modernity as a kind of escapism that simultaneously tries to acknowledge and to deny the finitude of the subject. Given this, I want to suggest that "man" is the attempt to replace the "metaphysical comfort" that was lost with the recognition of the finitude of the subject, by a kind of "anthropological comfort", i.e., by an attempt to find a certainty somewhere deep down "inside" the subject.

Foucault has convincingly shown the contradictory and instable character of this strategy of the analytic of finitude. But -- and this is the second, and to my mind even more crucial point -- if we want to find a way out of this predicament, it is not enough that we try to articulate a more consistent, coherent and stable "deep truth" about the subject. We only cross the threshold to our postmodernity if we not only leave behind the specific modern articulation of "man" as both an object of knowledge and a subject that knows, of "man" as surrounded by what he cannot get clear about and as yet a potentially lucid ego, of "man" as the product and the source of history; we only cross

this threshold if we are also willing and able to leave behind the "anthropological comfort" of modernity, i.e., if we are willing and able to resist the temptation to find our comfort in the identity or the nature of the subject (cf. Masschelein, 1993).

> '(W)e have to give up hope of ever acceding to a point of view that could give us access to any complete and definitive knowledge of what may constitute our historical limits. And from this point of view the theoretical and practical experience that we have of our limits and of the possibility of moving beyond them is always limited and determined; thus we are always in the position of beginning again.' (Foucault, 1992, 106)

If we are willing to follow Foucault in his critique upon the self-positing and self-transcending subject of modernity -- and I want to underscore that there is every reason to do so -- we will have to acknowledge the radical finitude and the radical historicity of our subjectivity. We will have to acknowledge that the subject finds herself in a history of which she he is not the author. We will have to acknowledge that the subject finds herself in a language that she has not herself invented. We will thus have to acknowledge that the subject finds herself in an intersubjectivity that precedes her subjectivity.

The crucial question now is how this intersubjectivity has to be understood. One thing is clear: is should not be understood as an intersubjectivity constituted by self-positing, self-transcending subjects (cf. Biesta, 1994a; 1994b). In this respect postmodernism implies a decisive departure from the paradigm of the philosophy of consciousness. But to my mind Foucault's arguments imply a further radicalization, in that they also preclude any understanding of intersubjectivity as itself a "deep truth" about human nature, e.g., in terms of man as a social animal or a *zoon politikon* (cf. Masschelein, 1993, 40). Such an understanding of intersubjectivity as "natural" or as man's "second nature" would once again come down to an attempt to find an "anthropological comfort" in human nature.

The critical task therefore is to think of intersubjectivity as the *non*-natural. This implies to think of intersubjectivity as open-ended, as without foundations and -- and this is the most crucial aspect -- as without any built-in guarantees. I want to argue that in this sense the intersubjective coincides with a certain conception of the *political*. Such a conception has, e.g., been developed by Chantal Mouffe (see Mouffe, 1993). Mouffe

argues for an anti-essentialistic understanding of politics. Here claim is that such an understanding of politics is better equipped to deal with plurality and difference than liberal and communitarian approaches are (see Mouffe, 1993, 7). To my mind the crucial difference here is, that a non-natural or anti-essentialistic articulation of intersubjectivity and politics does not ask for an admission ticket or an entrance exam. Are you human? Are you rational? Are you of my culture? Do you know enough about my tradition? It understands the intersubjective and the political as decisively agonistic (Mouffe, 1993) and in this sense as radically democratic (cf. Mouffe, 1989). This shows (once again; see Biesta, in press[a]) that, contrary to a commonly held opinion about the de-politicizing tendencies of postmodernism, the postmodern deconstruction of the subject in fact implies a return of the political.

3. Pedagogy without humanism

I now return to the question what the postmodern deconstruction of the subject entails for our understanding of pedagogical (inter)action, most notably with respect to the issue of manipulation versus communication.

First of all, we are now in a position to state with much more clarity what exactly is at stake in the postmodern deconstruction of the subject. At least with respect to Foucault, we can conclude that the thesis of the "end of man" only concerns the end of a specific articulation of subjectivity. It concerns the erasure of the Kantian monstrosity that was put forward to escape the recognition of the finitude of man. More generally, it concerns the erasure of any strategy to reconcile the positive and the fundamental.

This immediately suggests that postmodernism itself -- at least in its Foucauldian form -- starts from the recognition of man's finitude. I have shown that such a recognition does not imply the end of any articulation of subjectivity. But Foucault warns us that such an articulation can never precede the subject and can also never be merely theoretical. The subject is always already on the inside of history, on the inside of language, on the inside of the discursive and non-discursive practices in which she constitutes her own subjectivity and works at the limits of herself. The postmodern

deconstruction of the subject thus leads to a recognition of the primacy of intersubjectivity.

What does the postmodern recognition of the primacy of intersubjectivity imply for an articulation of the pedagogical? The traditional answer would be, that education is the process by which the child becomes equipped to take part in the domain of intersubjectivity. Education is seen as (manipulative) initiation into intersubjectivity. This suggests that makes education is a means towards an end that lies outside of education. I believe that this conception of education is a gross *underestimation* of intersubjectivity. First of all, there is strong empirical evidence to suggest that the child plays an active role in the constitution of its own subjectivity (cf. Biesta, 1994a; 1994b). This implies that the child is itself one of the constituents of the intersubjective matrix from which its subjectivity emerges. This in turn suggests that the education-as-initiation-into-intersubjectivity argument rests upon a misperception of the "location of culture" (Bhabha, 1994), as it locates culture outside of the (inter)acting agents. But even more important than this, the argument suggests that the child does not yet belong to the domain of "real" intersubjectivity. The child is not yet a "real" human being. But who decides when the child does belong? Who draws the borderline? Who in fact designs the entrance exam for humanity?

It has been especially within the tradition of Critical Pedagogy, both in its Continental and its North-American form, that the manipulative conception of education has been criticized for precisely these two points: the instrumentalization of education (education as a means) and the consequent exclusion of the child from the sphere of humanity. But the alternative of education as noncoercive dialogue, as practical discourse, and even -- most notably in German "anti-pedagogy" -- as a kind of Habermasian Ideal Speech Situation, is, I believe, a gross *overestimation* of intersubjectivity.[9] In this form, Critical Pedagogy supplies a correct diagnosis with an incorrect solution. The solution is incorrect because it articulates a conception of intersubjectivity that rests upon an untenable conception of subjectivity. This conception is not only untenable for pedagogical reasons (which is the argument from adherents of manipulative pedagogy); it is, as I have tried to show in the foregoing paragraphs, untenable anyway. There is no an "absolute" subject that precedes, constitutes, and determines intersubjectivity.[10]

This implies that a postmodern articulation of the pedagogical, i.e., an articulation of the pedagogical that wants to overcome the aporias of the analytic of finitude of modernity by recognizing the radical finitude of the subject, has to find its position *in between an underestimation and an overestimation of intersubjectivity*. Against manipulative pedagogy it holds that education is not a means, that it is not the road towards intersubjectivity, but that it is this very intersubjectivity itself. Against communicative pedagogy it holds that this intersubjectivity should not be understood in terms of full reciprocal discursivity.

The argument against manipulative pedagogy rests upon the claim that a postmodern articulation of the pedagogical has no "deep truth" about the subject. It does not know the nature of the subject, it has no fixed norm of what it is to be human, it can offer no "anthropological comfort". Of course, education as a really existing praxis can aim at the initiation in a specific culture or form of life. But, as Donald points out, such "authority" can only be enacted "in the singularity and performativity of agency" (Donald, 1992, 178). And precisely here the pedagogical is located. It is a practical transgression of concrete determination (cf. hooks, 1994); and this transgression is without guarantees.

The argument against communicative pedagogy therefore implies that the very idea of full reciprocal discursivity has to be given up, both as a pedagogical *and* a political ideal. The fully self-transparent subject required for such a discursivity is unattainable. This implies that education *and* politics will have to do away with the aims of autonomy, freedom and rational consensus in so far as they are thought *against* intersubjectivity, in so far as they are articulated as at the same time a denial of the recognition of the finitude of the subject and a "deep truth" about man's final destination.

This suggests that a postmodern articulation of the pedagogical is not interested in *what* the subject is; it is interested in *who* the subject is. It is not interested in *identity* as the being identical with; it is interested in *singularity*. Precisely because of this, the postmodern articulation of the pedagogical can retain the communicative intuition of the pedagogical project of Enlightenment; it can also sustain the critique of Critical Pedagogy against any instrumentalization and de-humanization of education. But it has to do all this without a deep truth of what it is to be human. It cannot take recourse to

an original nature of the subject (not even its social or political nature), nor to 'an epic conception of History as the long march towards Utopia' (Donald, 1992, 179). In this sense, it is a *pedagogy without humanism*.

Such an articulation of the pedagogical has to make the step from manipulation to communication, but is has to acknowledge that communication is always that which is at stake, that which is open ended and without any guarantees. Such a recognition not only requires a new style of pedagogical imagination; it also requires a new style of political judgement and political imagination (cf. Donald, 1992, 179). In both cases, it needs a sensitivity for the promotion of new forms of subjectivity, not only 'through the refusal of [the] kind of individuality which has been imposed on us for several centuries' (Foucault, 1983, 216), not only by a constant deflation of 'claims to authority' (Donald, 1992, 178), but also by heeding 'different, marginal, abnormal and transgressive voices that question the "we" of political dialogue and the "I" of agency' (ibid.), and by actually promoting transgression from identity to singularity, both at an individual and a collective level.

Endnotes

1. In the preparation for writing this paper, I have profited enormously from my discussions with Ari Kivela, University of Oulu, Finland, and Jan Masschelein, University of Leuven, Belgium, who both -- albeit in opposite ways -- have challenged and stimulated me with their questions and remarks. Of course, the responsibility the ideas expressed in this paper is totally mine.

2. Own translation from the Dutch version of *The Use of Pleasure* (New York: Pantheon, 1985): *Het gebruik van de lust* (Nijmegen: Sun, 1984), p.13-14.

3. See, e.g., Kant, who in his essay 'Ueber Pädagogik' [On Education] argues that 'Der Mensch ist das einzige Geschöpf, das erzogen werden muss. (...) Der Mensch kann nur Mensch werden durch Erziehung. Er is nichts, als was die Erziehung aus ihm macht..." (Kant, 1964, 697-699) [Man is the only creature that has to be educated (...) Man can only become man through education. Everything he is, he is because of what education has made him to be...]

4. A fine example of this consciousness-centered understanding of communication, is the so called "sender-receiver-model", on of the most common and influential conceptions of (human) communication (see Mcquail and Windahl, 1989).

5. I do not go into detail about the exact definition -- if any -- of the concept of postmodernism. With respect to this, see Biesta, in press[a].

6. The essence of Foucault's archeological method is that it is a description, not an explanation (cf. Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1983).

7. This point is discussed rather well in Foucault, 1991.

8. This interpretation has been suggested by John Dewey's reconstruction of the emergence of the modern subject (see Dewey, 1980; cf. Biesta, 1992).

9. Note that my point is, that it is an overestimation of intersubjectivity and not automatically of education.

10. Elsewhere (Biesta, in press[c]) I have argued that this conclusion is also supported by the fact that the intentions of an act never automatically coincide with its meaning; the meaning of an act is a function of the interaction.

References

Bartels, J. (1993). *De Geschiedenis van het subject* Kampen: Kok/Agora.

Bhabha, H.K. (1994). *The Location of Culture.* London/New York: Routledge.

Biesta, G.J.J. (1992). *John Dewey - Theorie & Praktijk.* Delft: Eburon.

Biesta, G.J.J. (1994a). Education as Practical Intersubjectivity. Towards a Critical-Pragmatic Understanding of Education. *Educational Theory, 44*(3), 299-317.

Biesta, G.J.J. (1994b). Pragmatism as a Pedagogy of Communicative Action. *Studies in Philosophy and Education, 13*, 273-290.

Biesta, G.J.J. (in press[a]). Postmodernism and the re-politicization of education. *Interchange, 26.*

Biesta, G.J.J. (in press[b]). The Identity of the Body. In: *Philosophy of Education 1994. Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Philosophy of Education Society.* Illinois: PES.

Biesta, G.J.J. (in press[c]). Education / Communication: The two Faces of Communicative Pedagogy. In: *Philosophy of Education 1995. Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Philosophy of Education Society.* Illinois: PES.

Dewey, J. (1972). Plan of Organization of the University Primary School. In: *John Dewey. The Early Works. Volume 5.* ed. Jo Ann Boydston. Carbondale & Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 224-243.

Dewey, J. (1980[1929]). *The Quest for Certainty.* New York: Perigree.

Donald, J. (1992). *Sentimental Education. Schooling, Popular Culture and the Regulation of Liberty.* London/New York: Verso.

Dreyfus, H.L. & Rabinow, P. (1983). *Michel Foucault. Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics. Second Edition. With an Afterword by and an Interview with Michel Foucault.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Foucault, M. (1973). *The Order of Things -- An Archeology of the Human Sciences* New York: Vintage/Random House.

Foucault, M. (1979). *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison.* New York: Vintage/Random House.

Foucault, M. (1980). *The History of Sexuality. Volume I: An Introduction.* New York: Vintage/Random House.

Foucault, M. (1983). The Subject and Power. In: H.L. Dreyfus & P. Rabinow. *Michel Foucault. Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics. Second Edition. With an Afterword by and an Interview with Michel Foucault.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 208-226.

Foucault, M. (1985). *The Use of Pleasure.* New York: Pantheon.

Foucault, M. (1986). *The Care of the Self.* New York: Pantheon.

Foucault, M. (1991). The ethics of care for the self as a practice of freedom. An Interview with Michel Foucault. In: J. Bernauer & D. Rasmussen (eds.), *The Final Foucault.* Cambridge/London: MIT Press, 1-20.

Foucault, M. (1992). What is Enlightenment. In: P. Waugh (ed.), *Postmodernism. A Reader.* London: Edward Arnold, 96-107.

Gössling, H.J. (1993), *Subjectwerden. Historisch-systematische Studien zu einer pädagogischen Paradoxie.* Weinheim: Deutscher Studien Verlag.

Habermas, J. (1988). *Der philosophische Diskurs der Moderne.* Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.

hooks, b. (1994). *Teaching to Transgress. Education as the Practice of Freedom.* New York/London: Routledge.

Kant, I. (1982). Ueber Pädagogik. In: I. Kant, *Schriften zur Anthropologie, Geschichtsphilosophie, Politik und Pädagogik.* Frankfurt am Main: Insel Verlag, 695-761.

Kant, I. (1991). *The Metaphysics of Morals.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Masschelein, Jan (1993). Grenzen aan Identiteit. *Pedagogische Tijdschrift (Speciale Editie), 18,* 39-42.

McLaren, P. (1991). Schooling the Postmodern Body. In: H.A. Giroux (ed.), *Postmodernism, Feminism, and Cultural Politics.* Albany: SUNY, 144-173.

Mcquail, D. & Windahl, S. (1989). Models of Communication. In: E. Barnouw, G. Gerbner, W. Schramm, T.L. Worth & L. Gross (eds.), *International Encyclopedia of Communications.* New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 36-44.

Mollenhauer, K. (1973). *Erziehung und Emanzipation.* München: Juventa (6. Auflage).

Mouffe, Ch. (1989). Radical Democracy: Modern or Postmodern? In: A. Ross (ed.), *Universal Abandon? The Politics of Postmodernism.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 31-45.

Mouffe, Ch. (1993). *The Return of the Political.* London: Verso.

Mul, J. de (1987). De maakbaarheid van het subject. Foucault en de pedagogiek. *Comenius*, *7*, 142-174.

Oelkers, J. (1983). Pädagogische Anmerkungen zu Habermas' Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns. *Zeitschrift für Pädagogik, 30*, 271-280.

Peters, R.S. (1963). Reason and Habit: The Paradox of Moral Education. In: W.R. Niblett (ed.), *Moral Education in a Changing Society*. London: Faber & Faber Ltd.

Schleiermacher, F.D. (1983/1984). *Pädagogische Schriften, hrsg. von E. Weniger & Th. Schulze*. 2 Bde. Frankfurt am Main: Ullstein.

Weedon, C. (1987). *Feminist Practice and Poststructuralist Theory*. London: Blackwell.

Young, R. (1990). *A Critical Theory of Education. Habermas and our Children's Future*. New York/London: Teacher's College Press.